



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Natalie B. Billing, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Lori Bartinik, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Joyce F. Bergeson, Laurie Kim Briggs, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Warren T. Cooper, Nancy S. Driscoll, Syma Ebbin, June Evered, Peter Fairbank, Melissa M. Finlayson, Irene B. Garagliano, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Wendy L. Hellekson, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, James Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Richard Metayer, Betsy Moukawsher, Scott Newsome, Deborah Peruzzotti, Kevin Power, Betty A. Prochaska, Don Pratt, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, and Cheryl Tilney

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

7:30 PM

Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

21 members were present at roll call, and a quorum was declared. (Rep. Peruzzotti arrived at 7:38 p.m.).

The Moderator reported that Reps. Baril, Bartinik, Bauer, Driscoll, Evered, Massett and Svencer called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Steinfeld and Rep. Streeter

Members Absent: Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bartinik, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bergeson, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Evered, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Massett, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steere, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Tilney

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Barnhart.

The motion carried 19 in favor, 2 abstentions. (Abstaining: Reps. Sebastian and Streeter).

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Billing stated that two liaisons have resigned; the vacant positions are liaisons to the Town Council and to the Joint Committee of Town Council/Board of Education/RTM.

The Moderator mentioned that notice has been given to the RTM concerning relocation of the RTM meetings during the Senior Center renovations and expansion. She stated that the Town staff recommendation is to relocate to the Town Hall Annex Community Room 1 on the third Wednesday of each month and to reserve Community Room 2 for caucus. She asked members to contact her if they would be unable to attend on a regular basis.

The Town Manager explained the reasons for this recommendation.

Discussion ensued about the availability of rooms at the Annex, using Noank School or using the media centers at the three middle schools on a rotating basis.

The Moderator noted that these suggestions and other options will be reviewed and that a vote will be taken at the November meeting.

2008-0215 Acceptance of Open Space at Neal Subdivision

This matter was Referred to the RTM Community Development & Services Committee, due back on November 12, 2008.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

1. Financial report

Mr. Vincent reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated & Unaudited Fund balance as of July 1, 2008 is approximately \$11.0 million; the General Contingency balance is \$350,000; the Capital Reserve balance is \$1,595,228. Mr. Vincent noted that the significant increase to the Capital Reserve Fund represents the balance from eight projects which all were completed under budget.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted three events that are taking place on Saturday, October 11, 2008. They are: the Fall Festival, the Dedication of the Tercentennial Playground and Jabez Smith House Colonial Heritage Day. He mentioned that the ground-breaking ceremony for the Animal Shelter and dedication of the salt shed are scheduled for October 17, 2008. He provided information in regard to the corrective actions that are underway at Northeast Academy and Catherine Kolnaski school playgrounds.

G. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Granatosky

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Fairbank

No meeting, no report.

4. RECREATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Power

Chairman Power read the minutes of the meeting held on September 24, 2008. (Minutes are attached.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

2008-0212 Long Island Sound (LIS) Grant - Esker Point Park Shelter

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LONG ISLAND SOUND PROGRAM GRANT FOR A SHELTER AT ESKER POINT PARK

WHEREAS, in the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2009, a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project was presented for a \$60,000 park shelter pavilion at Esker Point beach, based on funding by an anticipated grant of \$25,000 and a Town appropriation of \$35,000, and

WHEREAS, that CIP project was approved by the Town Council but was denied by the RTM, and

WHEREAS, Town staff believes that public interest currently supports expanding the available

shelter space, as indicated in part by additional rental fees that offset maintenance costs, and

WHEREAS, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has approved a \$25,000 grant to the Town of Groton from Long Island Sound license plate funding, pursuant to a grant application approved by the Town Council on April 1, 2008, in Legislative Item No. 2008-0078, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council appropriates \$35,000 in matching funds from the Capital Reserve Fund for the project set forth as CIP Project B4 in the Proposed 2009 Budget.

Refer to RTM

A motion was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Collins, that this matter be Adopted.

Rep. Garagliano stated she will support this item as she believes local contractors are looking for work and that may result in lower construction costs. She mentioned that income derived from renting the pavilion could offset future maintenance costs.

In response to several members, the Town Manager noted that the location of the pavilion will be in the existing picnic area. He explained the process of using undesignated funds in the CIP account.

Rep. Collins feels that the RTM clearly addressed this item during budget deliberations last spring and that they were not in favor of spending money on this item.

Rep. Power agreed with Rep. Collins and mentioned that the decision was made with the knowledge that an application for a grant was being submitted.

Rep. Ebbin feels it would not be prudent to approve unnecessary expenditures due to the current economic situation. She feels money may be needed for future unexpected increases in heating and vehicle fuel costs.

The Town Manager stated that he felt compelled to have the RTM review this item since the grant had been approved and that he was not sure why the RTM did not support the project during budget deliberations.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 3 - Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Harrell and Rep. Luck
Opposed: 19 - Moderator Billing, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Steinfeld and Rep. Streeter

5. PUBLIC SAFETY

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins

No meeting, no report.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Evered

No meeting, no report.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

2008-0277 FY2010 RTM Budget Discussion

FY2010 RTM BUDGET DISCUSSION

Discussed

Rep. Sebastian remarked that the 2010 budget discussion and guidance to the Manager needs to be started now as the Manager will be starting the budget process in December. He stated that the

RTM needs to decide what services could be recommended to the Manager for elimination or reduction. He mentioned that layoffs may be necessary next year due to union contractual agreements that include annual cost of living increases and step raises that raise the budget each year.

The Moderator stated that the November agenda will include budget discussion and creation of a process to have input to the Town Manager and Town Council early in the budget process.

2008-0245**FY2009 Budget Concerns****FY2009 BUDGET CONCERNS**

This matter was Referred to the RTM Finance Committee, due back on November 12, 2008.

Rep. Steinfeld stated her concerns about the impact on local residents of the national and global economic situation. She feels that the RTM should request reductions or constraints on expenditures for the current 2009 budget. She asked if direction could be sent to the Council and Town Manager.

Moderator Billing suggested that dialogue be initiated and that this discussion be on the November agenda.

The Town Clerk suggested that discussion be in the Finance Committee and appear on the next agenda.

Rep. Garagliano cautioned members that the RTM's function is as a fiscal body and that policy is initiated by Town Council.

Rep. Peruzzotti agreed with Rep. Garagliano. She stated that the RTM performed its function at the annual budget meeting. She feels that it is the Manager's job to monitor spending and make the necessary decisions and adjustments during this economic situation.

Moderator Billing referred the subject to the Finance Committee for recommendations to the full RTM.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. was made by Rep. Moukawsher, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk